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V.—*Failure of another Expedition to Explore the Interior of Africa.* From Original Documents in the Office of the Royal Geographical Society.

IN December, 1831, two gentlemen, Messrs. Coulthurst and Tyrwhitt, were introduced to the Council of this Society as being about to proceed, at their own expense, to the mouth of the Quorra, with the view of endeavouring to penetrate thence eastward to the Bahr-Abiad; and although their preparations were not on such a scale as to warrant any very sanguine hopes of success, it was felt to be a duty, on the part of the Society, to patronize so spirited an undertaking. They were accordingly placed in communication with Colonel Leake, and other members of the late African Association, whose advice, it was thought, could not fail to be of service to them. They were also introduced to Captain Owen, R.N. and Mr. Lander, the value of whose experience, in planning their operations, was obvious. And the expedition being brought under the notice of his Majesty's Government, (through the medium of two members of the Council,) the loan of a chronometer was obtained for it; with strong letters of introduction and recommendation of both gentlemen, to the officers commanding the Naval and Military forces of the Crown along the African coast.

The party sailed from the Downs on the 1st of January of the present year, and arrived at Bathurst, St. Mary's, in the Gambia, on the 28th of the same month. Both travellers were somewhat indisposed during the voyage; and the sun, after their arrival, so seriously affected Mr. Tyrwhitt, (who was scarcely more than twenty years of age,) that he here yielded to the repeated representations of his companion and others, and returned home. Mr. Coulthurst himself proceeded; but experiencing some delay in proceeding from the Gambia to Fernando Po, he proposed at one time to change his route at this point, and to penetrate, in the steps of Mungo Park, from the Gambia to the Djoliba, and thence to Timbuctoo and Funda, in prosecution of his ulterior object; being further tempted to this deviation by the prospect of being able to accompany a trading party then fitting out at Bathurst, which was destined to ascend the Gambia as far as might be practicable in canoes, thence to establish a regular communication by coffilah with the nearest point of the Djoliba*,—and which undertook to escort him as far

* This expedition seems to be a part of the operations of the company mentioned by Captain Belcher (p. 296), of which the following more detailed account has been obtained from the Colonial Office:—

‘ In the month of May, 1831, most of the merchants at Bathurst formed themselves into an association (with a capital of 5000*l.*) for the purpose of trading to the

as Seguin. The *St. George*, however, being ready to sail for Fernando Po before the arrangements on this line were completed, he ultimately reverted to his original plan; and the following correspondence will best exhibit his further proceedings.

Colonel Nicolls (Fernando Po) to R. W. Hay, Esq., Under Secretary of State for the Colonies.

‘ Fernando Po, March 29th, 1832.

‘ SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th and 22d of December, relative to Mr. Coulthurst. Being on the best possible terms with Duke Ephraim, and the opposite chiefs in my neighbourhood, I have taken all possible steps to ensure a good reception to Mr. Coulthurst. I sent him over as soon as I could; and the two letters herewith inclosed from Duke Ephraim and himself, will show you how well he has been received.

‘ Since their receipt Mr. Becroft went over, with the view of making the best terms he could for Mr. Coulthurst, in which he has succeeded with his usual zeal and ability.

‘ The whole of Mr. Coulthurst’s expenses, including the hire of an Eboe man, who is to accompany him all through his travels, and of a large canoe and her crew, which are to go beyond the Eboe country with him, will not amount to more

source of the river Gambia, or as high up as should be found practicable. They assumed the appellation of the “Tandah Company,” from Tandah, the name of the country highest up the river of which they had any authentic information; the principal trading port of which, called Tenda-Conda in the chart, is stated to be several “tides” above the Falls of Barraconda.

‘ Tandah and the neighbouring states are very productive in wax, hides, and ivory; and contain, it is said, some mines of gold. The people, who are of a mild disposition, have shown much inclination to trade; but, through the intervention of the Woolli tribe, have hitherto been prevented from reaching the British factories.

‘ The object of the merchants is, in the first place, to effect a firm footing in the Tandah country, where they hope to draw a considerable gum trade from the neighbouring states; and then, by degrees, to attract the traders from Bambaak, Kaarta, Bambarra, Bourree, Koukan, Footah-Jallon, and the intermediate countries, to all of which Tandah is a central point.

‘ The lieutenant-governor thinks that the extent to which the merchants may be thus able to open an intercourse with the interior of Africa, can hardly be estimated if the company should form caravans of the discharged soldiers on the coast, many of whom are natives of those countries, and who could join with the merchants and trade in coffilabs between the Gambia and Sego, Bourree, Timbuctoo, &c. He therefore applied for the permission of the Secretary of State to incur a small expenditure in exploring the river with the colonial schooner and canoes; and expressed an intention of performing this service in person. Lord Goderich approved of this expedition, and the lieutenant-governor has only been prevented from as yet effecting his object by the recent hostilities in which he has been engaged with the King of Barra.’

than 70*l.*; for which he has given the Duke a bill on his father, which Mr. Becroft and myself have negociated at our own private risk, as you ordered me not to subject the public to any expense in forwarding his views.

‘ I have, &c.

(Signed)

‘ EDWARD NICOLLS.’

Duke Ephraim to Colonel Nicolls.

Old Calabar, March 16th, 1832.

‘ MY dear Friend Colonel Nicolls,—Your letter came safe to hand on the 15th instant, and I am happy to hear you are well. The gentleman you sent in the schooner I have arranged with to send him in one of my large canoes as far as the Eboe country, which is as far as my authority extends; but I have no doubt but that I shall be able to procure him another guide from the chief of the Eboe country to pass him on to the next territory in safety, and so to continue it. At the same time it must be understood that it will be attended with a great deal of trouble and expense, which I hope he will not refuse to defray in all cases.

‘ I am sorry to say that I detained the schooner one day longer than was expected, on account of Calabar Sunday.

‘ I remain, &c.,

(Signed)

‘ DUKE CALABAR,

‘ King of Old Calabar, &c ’

Mr. Coulthurst to Colonel Nicolls.

‘ Henshawe, Duke's Old Calabar, Friday.

‘ DEAR SIR,—In returning my sincere thanks for the kindness I experienced at your hands in Fernando Po, I must also include the very obliging reception your recommendation obtained me from Duke Ephraim, who tells me he has plenty of Eboe people whom he can send with me, and I need not therefore trouble Captain Becroft to bring William Dore with him. Owing to our not arriving till the morning of yesterday, the Calabar Sunday, when one cannot get the people to do any work of moment, I did not even receive a definite answer from the Duke till to day. . . . Most of the mechanics here are natives of the Eboe country; and I really trust the difficulties attending that route, the direct line to Funda, are more ideal than otherwise, with the exception that I must necessarily expect to see a considerable portion of my goods melted down amongst the different native chiefs amongst whom the country is divided; and I suspect it was owing to the

want of any regular recommendation, more than anything else, that the Landers were seized and detained till ransomed. Now the Duke having constant commercial intercourse through the Enyong country, with the adjacent districts of the Eboes, his name will, at least, afford me a protection, perhaps beyond even the extent of his own personal knowledge. I told him how the king of Funda had been enabled, by means of the European musketry which had reached him from the coast, to make head against, and drive back Sultan Bello and his Fellatahs. He said he had heard of their wars and conquests; and I then observed, that not only himself, but every negro chief on this coast, had a common interest in preventing the Moors and their Mullams from usurping the whole of the country trade into their own hands, which, since their acquisition of Nyffé, where the palm-oil trade begins, they have ever aimed at doing. I thought it better thus openly to express myself than to leave any vague idea of mystery hanging over my projected visit to Funda; though I at the same time said that I had no direct commission from government to fulfil, but, in a commercial point of view, I might assist in opening up the resources of the country; and that I was travelling more particularly, like Mr. Holman, for my own amusement and instruction. Captain Becroft, for whom the Duke has much regard, will, I doubt not, from the kind zeal he has already shown in my behalf, arrange much better than I can my little matters of negotiation with him. I am convinced, from its long intercourse with England, that this is the best starting point; and having thus far made a good beginning, I hope it is not too presumptuous to look forward to a successful result, and that my next communication to you may be from Funda.

‘ Believe me, &c.

(Signed)

‘ C. H. COULTHURST.

Mr. Coulthurst to the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society.

‘ Old Calabar, Friday, 16th March, 1832.

‘ MY DEAR SIR,—Having concluded my arrangements for proceeding through the Enyong and Eboe countries, I may as well let you know the route I have taken in case any accidental circumstance which I cannot control prevent early tidings of me getting down to the coast. The Calabar river, though it does not itself communicate with the Quorra, yet has a parallel course with it, and from the point I shall quit it, a few days’ walk over a hilly country will, I am told, take me to Funda. Bonny, it is true, would give me the benefit of a water communication the whole way, as would Cross river; but both these rivers bear so

much to the west, that I should lose more time than in this advanced state of the season I can prudently spare ; besides which, there is more safety in following the line of traffic through which Duke Ephraim communicates with the Eboe country, which, from its great extent, it is impossible to avoid, except by ascending the river of Benin, to which there are other and greater objections, from its having been the last great vent for the slavers. The Quorra, I was told by natives both of Bambarra and Koukan, during my stay in the Gambia, certainly rises in the Kissey country, to which, by the river of that name, not half a degree to the northward of Sierra Leone, there is a navigable stream for small craft for 300 miles into the interior ; and it is to be regretted that the prior expedition which has ascended the Rio Grande should have taken the same low level as the Gambia and Senegal, and thus we have no knowledge, except through Caillé, of the great table-land of northern Africa. The principal mechanics here are from the Eboe country, and of a shade considerably lighter than the natives of the coast, nearly approaching to a copper tinge. There will be vessels here engaged in the palm-oil trade for three months to come, and I yet hope by one of these to let you hear from me from the source, at least, of the river.

‘ Believe me, &c,

(Signed)

‘ C. H. COULTHURST.’

Colonel Nicolls to R. W. Hay, Esq.

‘ Fernando Po, April 22th, 1832.

‘ SIR,—It is with sincere regret I inform you of the death of Mr. Coulthurst; he died on board the barque Agnes of Liverpool on the 15th inst. on her passage from Calabar. He had got as far as the Eboe country, about a fortnight’s journey from Calabar. The King of Eboe refused to let him pass, when he returned to Calabar, and took a passage in the Agnes for this place ; from what I can learn he was ill when he got on board the Agnes, which vessel had a very bad passage ; her commander, Mr. Cosenham, was also ill. I have secured most, if not all, Mr. Coulthurst’s effects, but I cannot find or get any intelligence of his writing-desk or journal ; nor can I get, for the present, any further particulars. I shall send to Calabar as soon as possible, and do all in my power to secure his papers. The duke was very ill when the Agnes left Calabar. There appears to me to be some mystery about the journal and writing-desk ; many valuable things, such as his watch, several gold rings, several small boxes of trinkets, looking-glasses, needles, scissors, knives, pistols, as would be supposed to excite the cupidity of the natives, are all safe in my possession, although most of them in very bad order from wet and

neglect. I ordered two magistrates, Mr. Becroft and Dr. Butter, with the clerk of the court, to make an inventory of them, in order to sell the whole by public auction, except the watch, four gold family mourning rings, and a broach, which I shall send to his father; and as soon as I become acquainted with all particulars I shall let you know.

‘ I have, &c.

(Signed) ‘ EDWARD NICOLLS, Lieut.-Colonel, &c.’

Mr. Coulthurst was the only surviving son of C. Coulthurst, Esq., of Sandiway, near Northwich, and was thirty-five years of age at the time of his death. He was educated at Eton; studied afterwards at Brazen Nose College, Oxford, where he took a very honourable degree; was entered at the Middle Temple, called to the bar, and resided six years in Barbadoes, where the influence of an uncle, who held a high legal situation in the West Indies, seemed calculated to bring him into advantageous practice. But from infancy his heart was set on African enterprise. His family is still in possession of some of his Eton school books, in which maps of Africa, with his supposed travels in the interior, are delineated; and at Barbadoes he used to take long walks in the heat of the day, in order to season himself for the further exposure which he never ceased to contemplate. His eager desires also took a poetical form; and a ‘ Soliloquy of Mungo Park,’ and other pieces of a similar description, of considerable merit, were written by him at different times. The stimulus which at length decided him, however, was the recent success of the Landers. He feared that if he delayed longer, another expedition would be fitted out on a great scale, and leave nothing which an individual could attempt. He completed his preparations accordingly; and the following extracts from his private correspondence, at different periods of his voyage, are not without further interest.

Bathurst, (Gambia,) 1st Feb. 1832.—DEAR ———. After a conference and palaver with some of the native chiefs, among whose grotesque forms and equipments you would have laughed to have seen me perched this morning supping palm wine, I have made up my mind to take the southern bank of this river, through Fooladoo to Sego. A messenger from the Almana of Bondou, who has undertaken to bring the gum trade here from the Senegal, is now in Bathurst; and the merchants are willing to assist in making up a coffila, which will enable us, I trust, to prosecute our journey in safety. Though I shall not thus reach the main object of Funda so directly as if I had had the good fortune to overtake the Pluto, it would be scarcely possible for me to do this now before the rainy season; and though I shall be a few weeks later in gaining that destination, I shall have the satisfaction of tracing the *whole* river, and giving the position of all the remarkable places on it, which neither Caillé nor Lander were able to do. There is now no earthly chance of the observations made by Park seeing the light, for Mr. Ainslie showed me yesterday his last letter from Sansanding, which I perused with much interest. You are aware that nothing but the unfortunate concurrence of the Fellatah conquests with the period of his expedition, and his being mistaken for one of their parties, occasioned its unhappy result; and by striking across the mountains, which we shall do at Baranco, about four hundred miles up, (to which place the colonial schooner has been kindly provided for our passage by the worthy Governor, who will most probably, with the Chief Justice and a party, accompany us thus far,) we shall only have twenty-four days' land journey to the mighty Niger, where he has scarce command of water enough to float a canoe. I shall be heard from, of course, from the head of this river, and I hope also from Funda, about the time of the smokes in October next; and I also look forward to the possibility, I dare not use a stronger word, of receiving letters from England up the Old Calabar river by some of the palm-oilers which may reach me at that place.

The climate here is so very superior to that in the bights of Benin and Biafra,

that, after Barbadoes, where shade is unknown, it really seems comparatively cold. I took a stroll of half a dozen miles to-day before breakfast, which I could not have done, without feeling languid afterwards, in the West Indies; but Tyrwhitt never could have borne up against the breathing oven of the Gold coast. All therefore has, I humbly hope, been ordered for the best; and the encouraging kindness with which we have been here received, the happy close of the Mandingo war, (for just opposite the point from which I write this, only three or four miles over, was assembled a force of many thousand armed savages, only five weeks ago,) and the curious fact of a recommendation prepared two years back tallying with the returning friendship of the Mahomedan negroes, the most powerful and intelligent of their race, all concur to give a cheering prospect of the future. Everything reminds me here of the near neighbourhood of the desert, the toke and turban very general, every man, not a Christian, a Musselman; and, what seems strange to European eyes, persons in the coarsest checks with gold ornaments to the value of hundreds of dollars.

Monday next I expect will see us once more on the wing, and could ——— join us he would be delighted with some of the finest partridge shooting in the world. The beautiful harnessed antelope, which it is really a sin to shoot, is common in the bush; and milk, honey, and rice, are to be had in most of the negro villages, this being quite the dairy country of Africa. But then there are musquitos that madden the best-tempered folks, and holy men with their eyes on the koran ready to dirk you for the slightest subject of difference; and it is curious to see the strangest characters of this sort well received and admitted to a familiarity at Government House, because they have much interest in the country, and it is politic just now to speak them fair. There is a savage sort of virtue, too, in these people, if you put a confidence in them and do not tempt them, as there is no danger of our doing, by the value of our goods. The island of St. Mary, on which this place is built, is a sandbank, four or five miles in extent, divided by a narrow creek from the main; and our authority does not extend a mile farther. Nothing but the shells preserved the place from being overrun by the Mandingoes, who are now, like the Turks, getting well armed with European muskets, and will never let their country be made an India of by us. They are some of the finest-made fellows I ever beheld, with none of the thick-lipped deformities of the southern negro.

Bathurst, 16th Feb., 1832.—DEAR ———, I will not leave the Gambia without redeeming the promise I made of letting you hear from me soon after my arrival in Africa. I was almost induced here to alter my destination so far as to proceed by the way of Sego; and, had arrangements been made to forward me on immediately, I believe I should have been tempted by the idea of traversing the whole course of the river from its source in the Kissey country, in which, from authentic information, it is ascertained it takes its course, to the Bahr-Abiad, where the natives here still persist that it flows.

Major Laing was correct in all the main outlines of his account; and one inducement with me for taking the western route would have been the hope of recovering his documents, which I am given to understand are at a place within a fortnight's journey of Timbuctoo. But the St. George being positively off to-morrow to the southward, and a gentleman here having undertaken to explore the nearest point of communication between this river and the Joliba, I shall hasten to the main object of my enterprise, with the hope of reaching Funda before the rains come down in any force; and at this time of the year I shall have the benefit of a south-westerly wind up the rivers in the Gulf. This place ought to have been selected, instead of Sierra Leone, as head-quarters for Western Africa, affording, as it does, the best inlet into the interior, whereas the latter is completely isolated; and the native chiefs are now anxious, from its superior local advantages, to transfer the gum trade here from the Senegal, which, except during the rainy months, (of no long duration on this part of the coast,) is almost hermetically sealed by its bar.

I am as well as I ever was in Cheshire; and, in a blanket dress, with my dread-nought canopy, may, I trust, defy the rains. This is merely a dry heat, the sand and locusts giving clear intimations of our near proximity to the desert.

Old Calabar, 19th March, 1832.—DEAR ———, As to-morrow evening will, I trust, see me fairly embarked up the Calabar on my way to Funda, I must now give

you some account of myself since leaving the Gambia. The early part of our passage was favourable; but we were so impeded by tornadoes, succeeded by calms in the Gulf, that I did not get to Fernando Po till yesterday week. Nothing could be kinder than the reception I met with from Colonel Nicolls, who sent me over in his own schooner free of expense; but I have certainly been unfortunate in not meeting with men-of-war. Mr. Barrow's letter will, however, I hope, be equally available to me in the Mediterranean. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the mountain forest of Fernando Po; the finest trees in England are dwarfs both in girth and height in comparison; and its highest peak equals in elevation that of Teneriffe; unlike which, however, it is generally mantled in clouds, and is only at intervals visible. I much enjoyed bathing in its clear transparent brooks, where the water is always pure and cool from the shady roof some hundred feet above; but here I cannot venture, on account of the alligators with which the river swarms. Three large Liverpool ships are lying here; and I had an excursion yesterday to Creek Town, once a very flourishing place, but now almost depopulated from the effect of African witchcraft. I saw some remains of handsome French mirrors, and other really costly things, such as handsome English sofas and chairs, broken to pieces, and offered up in the Devil's house of the place. Though Captain Owen by his exertions put a stop to human sacrifices openly here, yet every house of any pretensions,—and some are very well built and handsomely painted with the representations of tigers, snakes, and different fantastic figures, such as those given in Bowdich's Ashantee,—has, moreover, attached to its fetish tree in the centre of the open quadrangle or court, a skull, suspended to avert ill luck from its inmates; it is, however, held in no veneration, being that of some slave selected for the occasion. But the horrid error of their belief lies in the opinion that when an African gentleman goes to the other world he will be respected in proportion only to the number of slaves and dependants he carries with him: so that the best feelings of our nature are actually enlisted in the perpetration of these wholesale murders. Yet that they are an amiable people, in many respects, I can myself attest; their treatment of their slaves is much milder than I could have imagined the state of slavery to admit of; and their country, so far from being over-peopled, seems only here and there won by patches from the woodland, and teems with plenty under the most slovenly cultivation. Even now that the slave-trade here, owing to the late co-operation of the French, is nearly abolished, they get every thing they want in exchange from Europe for the oil from the palm which grows wild in their forests. The sugarcane, which I have been used to consider so precious, is gathered in its wild state, and is now being actually devoured in quantities by the slaves of the house while I am writing. The population of this place I should think equal to Northwich. With regard to scenery, a bend of the river near here, about the width of the Thames below London, resembles much that from Richmond Hill.'

Mr. Coulthurst was absent up the Calabar river about three weeks, and considered the refusal of the king of the Eboes to allow him to pass to have been chiefly owing to a war then raging in the country. He had not been exposed to any very severe fatigue; but his disappointment was great, and he laboured under considerable debility and depression of spirits. He died, without much suffering, on the second day after embarking in the *Agnes*.
